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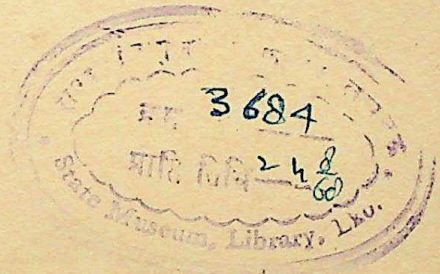

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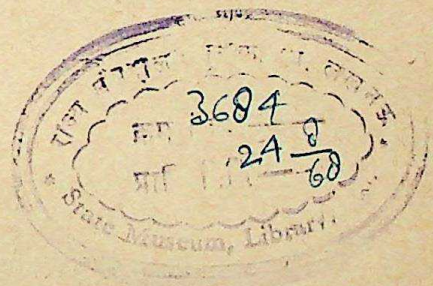

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THE NICOBARESE

The Nicobars consist of 20 islands occupying a land space of about 6035 square miles. These islands cover a seaspace of 163 miles. The northernmost island Car Nicobar is about 150 miles from Port Blair.

Over the islands population is not uniformly distributed. According to the last census the population has been recorded as 12,022. The general pattern of culture is the same in the archipelago. This description, is, therefore, based on the island of Car Nicobar which has a population of 8374 out of the total stated above.

Car Nicobar is divided into fourteen villages or *Penams*. The area of every village is recognised by the limits of its plantations, specially planted trees or by other large and big trees growing naturally. Once every year the boundaries are examined by the villagers lest there should be any encroachment. There is no individual ownership in village lands, for all lands are owned by the various *kinems* or the lineage groups.

Though the limits of the village are not thus clearly defined, the intra-territorial divisions are systematic. The lateral boundaries of the village coverage towards the centre of the island so that the maximum breadth is always found the coast line. The common layout pattern of the village in Car Nicobar may be reduced to the following diagram :

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CENTRE OF THE ISLAND

TAVAT
TULONG
THUBHT
BLPANAM

The above divisions of the village are not territorially exclusive ; for the purpose of economy, village organisation and customs of these divisions have specific use in the corporate life of the villagers. The *elpanam* is the premier place in the village where village hall, burial ground and birth houses are situated. Beyond *elpanam* begins the homestead areas known as *thuhet.* Sometimes homesteads are interspersed within coconut plantation, for in most of the villages coco-palms extent upto *thuhet* areas. Further inland from *thuhat* is *tulong.* This area mainly contains coconut plantations and sometimes areca palms, pandanus trees and patches grass fields (*AFO*). Coconut trees grow thin as *tulong* merges into *tavat.* The *tavat* area, which literally means jungle land, is generally used for gardening yams, taros, bananas, pandanus, papaya and often brinjals, chillies, citrus fruits and sugar cane. Besides, trees yielding timber, bamboos and canes are also grown in *tavat* and particular care is taken to preserve them, only to be cut for specific use such as building houses and making fishing canoes.

Every household has, in addition to its main dwelling houses in the *thuhet* area, one or two more

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houses either in *tulong* or *tavat* lands where some of the members of the household are required to reside permanently or occasionally for tending pigs and keeping watch over coconut plantations and cultivated gardens.

Since the village has separate territorial entity, its internal activities, external attitude to outsiders and inter-village relationship are guided and controlled by the village council headed by a captain and two other lesser Captains. The term Captain was possibly brought into use by the old continental traders in distinguishing the chief spokesman of the village. The administration has recognised this term as such and for all official purpose the First Captain, also otherwise called the Headman, has acknowledged authority in the village. Although this term is understood by the villagers their own term is *Mapanam*, meaning the head of the village.

The chief function of the Captain in official capacity is to maintain contact with the Government regarding his village, serve Government order to the villagers and report incidents like adultry, theft or murder, if any. The two lesser captains known as the Second and the Third Captain are assistants to the Chief Captain in these matters.

Minor offences, breaches of injunctions regarding plantations and condonable sexual misconducts are dealth with by the village council. In matters of internal organisation village council is the recognized autonomous body regulating social activities of the villagers. The village council is composed of the

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captains and the heads of all the lineage groups of the village.

The village council holds deliberation in the evening generally in the house of the *Ma-panam*. In addition to village affairs all incidents in the islands like coming of ships or arrival of new individuals would not escape notice of the village council.

The simple family consisting of husband, wife and children is always merged within the *Kinem*. The married couple with their children have no recognised status outside the orbit of the *Kinem*. The husband and the wife must belong to the *Kinem* or any of its subsidiary household as the case may be.

The *Kinem* is thus the primary social group. The main basis of the *Kinem* is, however, formed by the individual families of immediate cognates. The families within the *Kinem* are linked together through kinship and common economic bond, that in having common coconut plantations, garden land and joint household.

A big *Kinem* may be sub-divided into subsidiary house-hold units on the basis of coconut plantations, although major economic activities such as seasonal gardening are always organised on the basis of joint household.

Traced genealogically the joint household may be analysed as extended family in which siblings have not changed their residence after marriage.

Thus, the family type we get in Car Nicobar is composed of genealogically related individuals of both sexes with their spouses and siblings living in

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one homestead. This homestead is under the authority of a single head whose position is mostly determined by precedence of birth, experience, age and leadership within the group. The family forming a subsidiary household has its head also, but he exercises his authority under the supervision of the main household group which is often the *Kinem*.

In the joint household the right to alienate land cannot be transmitted through inheritance. The members of the joint household have no claim to own any portion of the common family land as personal property. Every *Kinem* has recognised alloted share in village lands—whether coconut plantations, garden lands or jungles. In this way, the entire islands is divided among the *Kinems* in this or that village. The *Kinem* is the land owning unit.

When a *Kinem* is in need of extra land for cultivation the head of the household will approach other heads in the village who have spare land for cultivation. The need will be fulfilled and the given land may be cultivated until the owning *Kinem* cultivate the land for themselves. This kind of temporary usufruct underlies the principle of reciprocity in socio-economic relationships that different *Kinems* and villages in close co-operation.

Although there is no title in land, the head of the household exercises his authority in controlling usufruct. It is the responsibility of the head of the household to put the family land under the best and profitable use.

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Formerly personal property like spoon, fork and utensils were destroyed during burial, but mortuary customs have changed due to spread of Christianity and such personal property is not destroyed any more.

The principle of kinsip in Car Nicobar is classificatory. Several types of relatives including consanguineous and affinal kins are donoted by common terms. The main characteristic here is that the classification of kins is primarily based on generation. Stating upwards the ego in the first generation would distinguish the parent group, the grand-parent and so on as follows :—

MUVOHNCO
KALVI
YOM
MONG
KUON

Boys and girls are all *kuon* to their parents and coversely all the males and females in the generation of the parents will be *Yong* to the boys and girls in the descending generation. The male *yong* is distinguished as *yong-kikonyo* and the female as *yong-kikano*. The same suffixes are also used to distinguish sex in generations upwards. In address, howewer, own father is called *mam* and the mother as *popo*. The affinal relations such as mother's

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brother, father's sister, sister's husband are all referred to as *yong*.

Among siblings the term *Mem* is used for elder brother or sister while the term *Kahem* include younger brother or sister. Outside the circle of extended family different terms are used to distinguish between older and younger persons of precedence in birth. Older persons would refer to younger person as *Manango*. Conversely the receiprocal term used by the younger persons is *Maroinylo*. Cross-cousins are not distinguished by different terms.

Marriage is regulated on the basis of *Kinem*. The *Kinem* is the exogamous division ; and every member of the *Kinem* must marry outside his or her own group. Cousin marriage is not the rule, for often children of brothers and sisters remain in the same family ; this being so the children of brothers and sisters will all be *Kuon* and marriage among *Kuons* in the same *Kinem* is entriely prohibited. Even when children of brothers and sisters belong to different families due to change in residence after marriages, first cousins of opposite sex are not allowed to marry. Marriage between cousin can, however, be considered possible if they belong to separate *Kinems* in different villages. But such marriage must await ratification by the village council. In fact all marital unions must be approved by the village council.

The chief factor that determine residence after marriage is economic. The head of a joint-household having excess cultivable lands and plantations would always try to retain the married members within

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the family of orientation so that the productive support they would contribute to economic operation of common family resources would materially enhance the position of the household. The resourceful head of the household would thus be able to oblige kinsmen and friends with lavish reciprocal feasts and presents, thereby attaining influence and social position in the village.

When a spouse takes up residence with another family he or she becomes a member of that family leaving all economic share which he or she might have enjoyed in the family of orientation.

Due to systematic and rapid spread of Christianity, the original religious beliefs and practices have become ineffective and lost dynamic influence. There are nine established churches around the island constructed by the villagers themselves.

There are Christians and non-Christians in the same household and in the same family. The remaining non-Christians who will not exceed 1500 are spread out in various families and *Kinems*, not forming any hard core of original religion. The non-Christians are allowed to join prayers and functions in churches.

Some old religious practices are still nominally followed by old persons, but these religious observances too are not uniform in all the villages.

According to original religious belief the evil spirits known as *Sia* is the source of all malady. These spirits are blood-thirsty and pounce upon men and women and children whenever they got any chance. Only magicians called *to-mi-luo-no* are

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capable of communicating with evil spirit. These spirits can roam anywhere but generally they have their abode in less frequented jungly places which could be located only by *to-mi-luo-no*.

The magicians also know the art of curing disease. Formerly there was a clique of magicians and those who were selected to become magicians were called *a-fai*. In contact with Christianity the clique of magicians has dissolved.

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THE ADI OF THE SIANG FRONTIER DIVISION, (N.E.F.A.)

The hilly region lying between the Subansiri and the Debang rivers in the Siang Frontier Division on the North East Frontier Agency is the land of the Adi. They are a group of Tibeto-Burman speaking people who till recently were kown as the Abor. They number roughly about 68,000 souls and comprise several endogamous groups like the Padam, Minyong, Pasi, Pangi, Karko, Milang, Simong, and Bomo-Janbo and each one of them occupies a separate territorial zone.

The Adi are a Mongoloid people. They are short statured with well developed bodies. They have straight black hair, oblique eyes and high cheek bones.

The Adi live in permanent villages, the site of which is always chosen on a mountain side or spur with a view to satisfy the demands of water-supply, healthiness and defence. Water in most cases is brought to the village by joining bamboo tubes from nearby springs.

An Adi village consists of a cluster of houses built upon platform resting on piles. The houses are built facing either east or west and the lanes and bye lanes of the village skirt round these houses. The *Moshup* or bachelors' dormitory is erected at the

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centre or in such a prominent place that a sharp watch can be kept on the village in case of fire or other emergencies. The *Rasheng* or the girls' dormitory is in existence only in the villages high up in the mountain, and the village granaries are erected like miniature platform houses in groups at a distance from the dwelling houses as a protection against fire. The entrance to an Adi village is always guarded by bamboo gates which in times of epidemics are closed to the outsiders. In some villages dogs are sacrificed and hung on the porch of the gates before any stranger is allowed to enter.

Among the Adi, their dwelling houses which are generally 40ft. by 20ft. are built on raised platforms about 4 or 5ft. high supported by posts and beams of bamboo and wood. The flooring is made of split bamboo and the walls are made of by joining wooden planks hewn out with a *dao*. The roofs which come down almost to about 3 or 4ft. off the ground are thatched with cane or fan palm leaves. In some villages roofing is done by the dried leaves or with the dried stems of the wild banana trees. In front of each dwelling house there is an open platform which is followed by a covered portico. The living room behind this covered space is a single room with a central fire-place which serves the purpose of cooking and lighting and around which the family lives. Behind each dwelling house is the pig-sty which also serves as the lavatory for the household. One enters the house by means of a ladder which is just a notched log of wood.

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The boys' dormitory called *Moshup* which is also raised off the ground on logs is a long hall. Apart from serving as a guard house it serves as the meeting place for the *Kebang* or the village Council and for holding Communal festivals and rites of the village. It also serves as a guest house. Bamboos, wood, cane and cane leaves from the chief materials in building the *Moshup*. The walls like that of their dwelling houses are made of by joining roughly hewn wooden planks and the entrances are made through notched wooden logs. Inside the *Moshup* there are a number of *Meroms* or fire-places to each of which new entrants are admitted and they sleep round each fire-place for a period of from five to six years. It is only after marriage that they leave the *Moshup* and sleep either in their house or in the house of their wives. But they retain their individual *Merom* membership throughout their lives. All trophis of the chase are hung on the walls of the *Moshup*.

The *Rasheng* or the girls' dormitory is generally built in a little secluded place inside the village. It is a small platform house with walls made of stout bamboo poles leaving the door way on one side. The hall which is about 20 ft. by 15 ft. contains a *Merom* or fireplace in the centre round which the girls sleep at night. The membership to the *Rasheng* is confined to the unmarried girls of the village who sleep there till they are married.

The Adi are expert in building bridges. Admirable suspension bridges of cane tubular in shape are

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built by them over the Dehang and a few large rivers in their country.

The dress of the Adi is simple. A man wears a loin cloth, a Sleeveless coat and puts on a closely woven cane hat as a protection against sun and rain. A *dao* in a seath and a side bag of either cotton or monkey or bearskin complete his outfit.

The women wear a cotton skirt woven in red, blue or yellow stripes reaching down up to the knee. Though they wear sleeveless jacket or blouses, sometimes they are seen wrapping round the upper part of their bodies with a white cotton wrapper.

The Adi ornaments consist of necklaces, earrings and metal bracelets which are worn by both the sexes. The necklace called *Taddak* are of blue, white and yellow beads and are either imported from Tibet or purchased from the markets in the plains.

The bracelets generally made of brass are made by the local smiths and are worn by both men and women. These are ornamented with various designs.

The ear-rings are made of silver or lead. Some Padam girls of Damroh wear heavy leaden coil ear-rings which make their ear lobes extended to a great extent.

Another set of ornament made locally is the *Beyop* which is worn by the Adi maidens till the birth of the first child. It consists of a girdle of brass metal discs each about 3 inches in diameter strung on a cord. Sometimes these discs are made of different sizes. The *Beyop* is worn round the waist sometimes under the

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skirt and at every movement they produce a jingling sound. They also wear nicely plaited cane rings round their waists.

Tattooing is practised by most of the Adi ; and some women tattoo the calves of their legs extensively with a pattern of rows of cross-marks.

Both the sexes cut their hair short all round the head. They cut their hair by laying it across the blade of a *dao* and beating it with a stick.

Though rice is the staple food of the Adi, in the higher up villages another cerial called *Anyat* (*Coix Lachryma*) forms a substantial part of their diet. Meat of all animals except tiger is relished by them all. Fish is a favourite article of food. Fishing is generally done by setting large conical bamboo baskets against the current where the fish are swept in them by the force of the currents. Fish are sometimes caught by poisoning the pool with some jungle fruit.

Hunting is both a necessary and a favourite pastime of the males. Squirrels, wild rats, jungle fowls and other birds are caught on bamboo bowspring traps with cord nooses called *Etku*. For the larger animals, a heavy deadfall trap is used, the weight being large stones on a bamboo wooden structure. Deer are driven with men and dogs and shot with bows and poisoned arrows by other men posted at suitable spots.

The household implements of the Adi are mostly made locally. Bamboo and gourd vessels are used in abundance, but the craft that stands highest among

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them is basketry of which their cane hats and baskets are good examples. The most striking part of the Adi's headwear is the cane hat or helmet which is worn only by the men. The ordinary cane hat resembles a bowler hat with a broad brim. It is made of successive thin cane rings which are built-up and stitched together with strips of fine cane woven vertically and so closely as to cover the ring foundation to make it waterproof and sword proof. The helmets are brimless and though made of closely plaited cane strips, the outerside is strengthened by stout cane pieces radiating from the apex so as to thwart a sword cut of the enemy. Some of the helmets are decorated with the head of a hornbill, boars' tusk and the bears skin. Bamboo baskets of different shapes and sizes are made by the men for their every day use. In few of their villages, the Adi made handmade earthen cooking pots ; but the introduction of brass pots and other metallic utensils from the plains has led to the disappearance of this craft.

The Adi girls are expert weavers. They weave their multicoloured skirts called *Gale* decorated with various geometric designs in their small single heddle tension or lion looms. They also weave a kind of cotton rug called *Gadu* from the cotton grown in their fields. These rugs besides serving their own purpose, are also sold in the market to plains people at a price varying from Rs. 10/- to 20/- each according to size and quality.

The Adi still use flint and steel for lighting fire.

The main ecomomic basis of the Adi is their

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agriculture and animal husbandry. Of the livestock they keep *Methans* (*bos frontalis*) and breed pigs, dogs and chickens.

Owing to the hilly nature of the country the Adi depend for their livelihood on shifting cultivation known as the *Adi arik* whereby forests are cleared and fired and cultivated for two to three successive years before they are allowed to lie fallow for a cycle of years which may vary from 9 to 15 years according to the amount of arable land available to each village and the fertility of the soil. Rice, job's tears millets and maize form their staple crop. Cotton ginger, chillies, colocasia, gourds, sweetpotatoes, tobacco and other leafy vegetables are also grown along with rice in the same field.

Among the Adi, the village forms the largest agricultural unit, each having its own *Adi-arik* fields within its territorial boundaries. Within the territorial division of the village all arable lands are divided into two categories. The first called *Patat* or field is to make regional rotation of *Adi-Arik* possible and the second which is called *Arik* is to facilitate the allotment of a suitble *Patat* to each household in the village ; and each village possesses a number of *Patats* which are brought under cultivation every year. Such division of land in most cases represents areas first cleared of the virgin jungles by the household of the original squatters and the cultivation titles pass on to the male descendants. But in some villages certain lands held in common are called *Moli Patat*, the ownership of which rests with the village. In times of

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shortage of arable land, the needy people are allowed to cultivate on such land. No compensation is claimed by the village Council from the user and the land reverts to the village after the cultivation is over. Besides the territorial rotation of fields, the Adis practise the annual rotation of crops. In the higher region where cultivation is carried on in the high steep hills, the main cereal crop *Anyat* (*Coix Lachryma*) is sown along with *Ayak* (*Setaria Italica*) millets in their new *Patat* which is thrown open at the end of the regional rotational period. This is followed in the second year by the sowing of rice and *Mirung* (*Eleusine Coracana*) millets before it is left as fallow. At the foothills rice which forms the staple food of the people is grown for two successive years in a field mixed with maiza, *Ayak* and *Mirung* millets ; but when *Anyat* is grown, the field is cultivated for three successive years before it is left as fallow. The clearing of the jungle is generally done in April and after a month fire is set to the dried jungles. Rice, maiza and *Anyat* seeds are then dibbled into the soil with the help of a digging stick or a *dao*. Other millet seeds are sown broad cast. The weeding is done with a horse-shoe shaped bamboo scraper. The method of harvesting is rather primitive. Paddy and *Anyat* grains are stripped from the stalk by hand straight into large conical basket ; *Ayak* ears are plucked with hand and *Mirung* ears are cut by a small knife. After gathering the crop they are thrashed, winnowed and cleaned in the field before bringing the harvest to the village to be stored in the granaries.

In a few villages at the foot hills, the Adis are us-

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ing plough to raise their staple cerial rice in their wet fields.

In order to have a bumper harvest, the Adi seek the help of the supernatural aid in different stages of their agricultural operations. Communal sacrifices are held and *Methans* and pigs are sacrificed to *Kine-Nane*, the Mother Earth and her husband *Dove-Bote*, the sky spirit ; and invocations are made to them for the welfare of the crops. Each sacrifice is followed by a few day's *genna* when all out-door activities come to a stand still.

Most of the work in the field is done by the husband, wife and their children as well as any relative who may be a member of the household. But at times, when outside help is required by a family, girls from the *Rasheng* (girl's dormitory) or the *Penungs* (team of village girls) or the Moshup boys provide the labour and in return for their services the hirer gives the group one basket of paddy of about 15 seers, or a *Taddak* or bead valued at about Rs. 5/6. Besides this, as is the custom, these workers are treated by the person with cooked rice and beer on the day they are engaged to work in his field.

The main drink of the Adi is the *Apong* which is mostly brewed from *Mirung* millets.

The main wealth of the Adi consists in their *Mithan*, *Taddak* beads and the *Dankis*. The latter which is still used as a medium of exchange is a bronze bowl of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in diameter and is believed to have been imported from Tibet. It is ornamented with

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conventional Buddhist symbols such as the fish, lotus, conch shells, umbrella and the wheel of life.

Marriage among the Adi is a simple affair. Each group is divided into a number of exogamous clans from which partners are chosen. After formal sanction is given by the girl's parents the husband regularly visits his wife at night in her parent's house and it is only after some years that he is allowed to bring her to his own house. Though polygyny is allowed it is not of common occurrence. Divorce is allowed and the practice of a widow marrying her husband's brother is prevalent among them.

The religion of the Adi centres round their belief in a number good and evil spirit called *Uyus* and *Urom* respectively. The good *Uyus* are generally associated with agriculture, live-stock and general prosperity of the village and are supposed to reside in the sky and in the under world. Of the many malevolent spirits, who are supposed to haunt the hills, forests and streams, the *Taleng* and the *Nipong* groups of *Uroms* are most dreaded by the people as they are held responsible for sudden and accidental deaths ; besides there are other malevolent spirits who are supposed to be the cause of other ailments of the people. In case of illness priests called *Miru* are engaged to detect the spirits responsible for such illness and *Methans*, pigs, chickens and even dogs are sacrificed to propitiate or appease such spirits.

The Adi bury their dead and build a small lean-to shaped hut over the grave. In case of children, conical shaped bamboo structures are erected over

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the grave. Personal belongings of the deceased are hung in fout of the grave and food and drink are offered daily for sometime in the grave by the bereaved family.

The Adi are a democratic people and their socio-political unit is the village rather than the tribe or tribal group. Each Adi village is run by a few selected *gams* or headmen assisted by the *Kebang* or the village council. The *Kebang* settle both the administrative and judicial matters concerning the village. They settle such matters as when and where to clear the forests for their cultivation, when to make a bridge or road and when and in what manner to celebrate the annual festivals and sacrifices. Besides, the *Kebang* also try cases brought before them and the offenders are penalised with various types of fines or punishment.

Music and dancing play a very important role in the socio-religious activities of the Adi, and both men and women sing and dance together to the rhythemic steps of the *Miru* priest who leads the music and the dance.

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THE ANGAMI NAGA

The district of the Naga Hills covers an area of 4276.1 square miles. On the north, it is bounded by Sibsagar, on the east by the Naga tribal area ; on the south by the State of Manipur and on the west by the Mikir and the north Cachar Hills. It has two sub-divisions, namely, Kohima and Mokokchung.

The principal tribes of the Nagas living in the district of the Naga Hills are the Angamis, the Aos, the Semas and the Lhotas. The most warlike and important of these tribes are the Angamis who occupy the country in the neighbourhood of Kohima.

The present population of the Angami is 28,311, out of which male is 15,037 and female is 13,274.

Ordinarily the stature of Angami Naga varies from 5 ft. to 6 ft. in height. They have flatten nose and slightly oblique eyes. The colour of the eye is always brown. Hair is generally black and straight.

The villages of the Angami are invariably built either on the top of a hills or on narrow terraces along the side. One enters a village through a gate. The arrangement of the houses in an Angami village is irregular. The Angamis build their houses in any locality within the village wall that seems convenient. The typical Angami house

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is a one-storied structure. The Angami house is faced with planks and has a thatched roof which slopes from the ridge pole to within a few feet of the ground. The sides and back walls of the Angami houses are generally of bamboo matting from the ground. The front wall is made of wood. It is often decorated with the heads of men, *mithan*, pigs, etc., usually represented by more or less conventional designs. Rich Angami men sometimes decorate the front of their houses with painted representations of men and women, of *mithan*, of shields, etc.

Children live with their parents till their marriage but will sleep elsewhere from very early youth. The place where bachelors spend the night is known as *morang* (bachelor's dormitory). The Morang of young men's house which is such an important feature among all the Naga tribe, is insignificant in the Angami village. In many Angami villages there is not even a nominal Morang. In any case among the Angamis proper the "Morang" is not habitually used by the young men, as it is in the Aos and others. But it is used on the occassions of ceremonies and gennas which by traditional usage call for a house definitely alloted to the young men of the clan. At other times it is used merely as a casual resort of the village bucks, and perhaps as an occasional sleeping place for a young man finding it temporarily inconvenient to sleep in the outer chamber of his father's house. But every Naga village is divided into several *khels* and the young men of every *khel* have their *morang*

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where they spend their night from the age of ten or twelve.

The *morang* is situated by the side of every *khel* and is separated from the other house in the village. The members of each *khel* look upon their *morang* with pride and decorate it to the best of their ability. The *morang* has no open verandah at the back as in the ordinary house. Women cannot visit the *morang*.

The important utensils found in the house of the Angami usually are the following (1) Decorated Bamboo-versel used as drinking cup (2) Earthen pot for cooking. This is a large clay vessel used for cooking meat or rice, or for boiling water and making liquor. The clay from which they are made is only obtainable from certain villages of Angami country.

(3) *Gourd vessel* for storing and carrying liquor

(4) *Wooden Platters*—These are of all sizes and several patterns. The most popular pattern is round shaped with four legs.

Originally Angami cloths were made of entirely local materials. The whole operation is performed by women but there is no prohibition against the touching of implement by men. The pattern of the embroidery work is almost triangular in shape. The material used is either the same cotton thread as that used for weaving or wool brought from the plains. The needle used now-a-days is sometimes a steel one, imported.

After weaving, the important industry is black-

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smithy. Spearheads and butts, boas, axes, and spade-hoe and knives are their principal productions.

Basketry is also very important industry. The baskets are made for a variety of uses. They are made either to stand in the house or to carry on the back or for both the purposes. Necklets, armlets, and begging are also woven from fine strips of dyed cane.

The main occupation of the tribes residing in the Naga Hills is agriculture. The ordinary method of agriculture practised is *jhum* or shifting cultivation, *i.e.* by clearing lands and growing crops on it for two years and then allowing it to return to jungle. A considerable are is under *jhum* among the Angami Nagas. They have also adopted an elaborate system of terracing and irrigation by which they turn the steepest hill sides into flooded rice-fields. Terraces are built on the slopes both below and above their villages. These are irrigated by hill streams, whose water is carefully distributed by means of narrow channels all over the terraced hill-side.

Each terrace cannot have its own channels, but usually obtains water either from the next terrace above it or from one of the terrace in the same row. The terrace should be so carefully graduated that the water may flow from terrace to terrace. Water may also often carried from one terrace to another terrace in a hollow bamboo passing over other terraces and channels in between.

An ample supply of water is required for terraced cultivation. Without it, Angami villages could not

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exist at all. The initial labour for making terraced field is very great, but once made they give less trouble than a *jhum* field. They are close to the village site and jungle cleaning is not necessary and many of the terraces are entirely dependent on rainfall. This system of cultivation is the most striking difference between the Angamis and the Seams and Aos who depend upon shifting cultivation or *jhum* only. Ownership of terraced fields is not communistic but strictly individual.

The Angamis have several exogamous divisions. Marriage is prohibited within a clan. The son builds a separate house after marriage and lives separately from his parents. The real unit of the social life of the village is the clan. The rivalry of clan within the village has coloured the whole of Angami life. The *Kelhu* is the original exogamous division of the Angamis. The *Kelhu* breaks up into the *thino* which again splits up into new *thinos*. After that it again splits up into *putra*. In the present generation the *putra* is the real exogamous unit.

A man cannot bequeath his property to any one outside his kin. Only males can permanently inherit real property and the males of one generation share alike. If a man leaves no sons but several first cousins, property is divided equally among them. A woman's own property goes to her children, her personal ornaments always to the daughter. Failing children her property goes to her father's heirs.

Another noticeable feature among the Angami is to observe death ceremony. On a death occuring,

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the village is genna for a day. The boy is washed and dressed in fine clothes. The grave is dug by a son or by a near relative. It is dug east and west. Men are placed facing east, women facing west. The cows and pigs are sacrificed according to the wealth of the family. The grave is a simple pit, no coffin is employed, the body is carried out on a plank. With a man are buried two spears, a dao, a shield, a gourd vessel, his pipe and a bow ; with a women her iron walking stick. a gourd vessel, her rain-shield and weaving apparatus. The grave is filled in by those who dug it. After the grave has been filled in, a small chicken is strangled and then hung on the grave. This detail custom varies somewhat, but a fowl is killed in every case. After the death the house is genna for five days.

If a person is accused of crime, he is punished according to customary rules. Offences, such as the breaking of *genna* would probably be published with a fine paid to the village fund or to the clansmen. Rape was punished by locating of the raptor and by his expulsion from the village for three months.

Head hunting was practised among the Angami Nagas. It was belief that the sacrifice of a man ensured good crops.

The Angamis believe in the soul-matter and forms the essential feature of their religion. After the death of a man a grave is dug either in front of the house or by the side of one of the village paths. The dead body is covered with a cloth and laid in the coffin before burial. In case of a man, a spear

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is placed beside the dead body, while in the case of a woman, a piece of black cloth and a few beads take its place. Then the coffin is covered over with flat stones. The Khasis also build a stone tomb over the grave. On a man's grave they put the skulls of slaughtered cattle, weapons, drinking utensils, etc. But on the woman's grave, a little basket is placed containing her spinning and weaving utensils. The Angami believe that the sprit of men and women live in heaven first as they used to do on the earth.

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THE KHASI

Shillong and Jowai form two Sub-divisions of the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills district of Assam. The former is also known as Khasi Hills which is inhabited by various sections of Khasi tribe, namely, Khasi proper, Bhoi, War and Lynngam. The first group is concentrated in the central table land, whereas the Bhoi and the War are confined to the northern and southern slopes of this hill respectively. The Lynngam live on the western fringe of this district who have some similarity with the neighbouring Garos. Jowai is the headquarters of the eastern Sub-division which is also called Jaintia Hills. It is the region of an another Sub-tribe known as pnar who are also spoken of as Syntengs. Linguists are of opinion that the word is derived from the word *Zeinten*, which ultimately changed by the contiguous Aryan speakers to Jaintia. It has also received the name after the Kings of Jaintiapur, which is situated at the foot of this hill, now included in East Pakistan. A considerable number of such people have been enumerated as Jaintia (23,639) being the inhabitants of Jaintia Hills, whereas the others have recorded in the census of 1951 either as Pnar or Synteng with a population of 12,752 and 26,097. The numbers of other sections of the Khasi Hills have not been properly ascertained and are all grouped as Khasi, showing a population of 2,23,413. When

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these figures are added together, the total Khasi population reaches the figure of 2,94,679.

The Khasi language belongs to the Mon-Khamer family. This is surrounded on all sides Sino-Tibetan languages spoken by other tribal population of Assam. Different Sections of the Khasi tribe have their own dialects which cannot be understood by each other but the southern Khasis of these two sub-divisions, are referred to as War-Khasi and War-Pnar, in view of their speech being somewhat akin to those of Khasi and Pnar.

It is difficult to say anything about their history which is obscure but they believe to have come to this present habitat somewhere from north and were settled on a wider area than they occupy at present. Ethnically they are Mongoloid, having a skin colour of light brown. The people of central upland are lighter in shade as compared with other groups of Khasis. Their head is of medium size (mesocephalic) and the stature is short.

They have completely given up their traditional garb known as *jymphong*. It is a jacket which hangs down upto the waist leaving the arm and neck bore. The undergarment is an unsween cloth (*dhoti*) like the plains people, but now they wear any sort of dress as available in the market. The women's dress have not undergone any drastic change. A modern blouse with full sleeves is worn over the body when a petticoat forms the undergarment. A long piece of cloth called *Ka Jainsem* is worn over it and another piece of cloth *Ka Jain Kuph* is thrown over the back, to form

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a cloak whose two ends are knotted in the front. The head is covered by the cloth called *tap-maw-khlieh*. Sometimes, the women use stockings which are simply a long piece of cloth worn round the legs.

The villages are not perched on the top of hills but a little below, as a protection against strong winds. They seldom change the sites of their village to which they are very much attached. The simple house is the thatched cottage with plank or stone walls and are constructed on a plinth of one or two feet from the ground. The house has a covered porch in the front and one of the three rooms of their house is a kitchen in which the fire-place is in the centre. The other two are used as bed rooms and store. The last one sometimes serves as a place of worship of their household deities. They do not confirm to the traditional unilinear pattern but any plan suitable to them are made replacing the roof by corragated iron sheets. They normally sleep over a mat on the floors but well-to-do elements use wooden cots. Even their household articles are gradually replaced by enamel, aluminium and glass wares but the storing materials are usually local made cane baskets. Some of them are of conical in shape being round and broad-mouthed at top, tapering to a pint at the bottom. These are much used for carrying articles to their markets or for use in their journeys.

Ordinarilly two meals form their daily diet but those engage themselves to hard labour, especially the cultivators, add a mid-day meal. It consists of rice and a vegetable curry, when the latter is often

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supplemented with fish or meat preparations. The pnar of eastern Khasi Hills avoids beef but all the sub-tribes of Khasi are connoisseur of dry fish. Both distilled and fermented liquors are prepared from rice in which latter is used invariably in their socio-religious affairs.

The Khasi are an agricultural people. They practice shifting as well as wet cultivation. Paddy is sown broadcast and no irrigation or watering is done in such fields. In wet-cultivation, the bottom of vallys are divided into compartment (*lyngkhot*) in which water is let in by means of narrow channels. The western Khasi prefer to hoe the soil with their *Maw-kheiw* but the Pnar use plough (*Ka lynghor*) instead. Transplantation is not practised and seeds are broad-cast. The rice are of two varieties ; one that is grown in high lands and the other is raised in the valleys which is more productive than the former. Oranges are grown in the southern slopes while in the central uplands, potatoes form the principal crop. The Khasi resume their agricultural operations after the fall of rains in the early part of May and harvestings is usually done in the October. Sometimes, they grow maize, millet, and sweet potatoes in their gardens during this time to enable them to tide over their lean period and devote the remaining period of the year in collecting fire wood to last for the whole year.

The Khasi are matrilineal, reckonning descent through the mother. The smallest social group is the family. The mother with her children stays in her

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own house. The eastesn Khasi follow a different custom in this respect as husband remains as a member of his mother's house during his life time, visiting his wife's during the night only. The youngest daughter (*ka khaduh*) inherits the major portion of the property for the worship of house-hold deities is entrusted to her. She acts more or less as a custodian of the ancestral property. It is their duty being the owner to support the children of her sisters in case of their death. The war of southern Khasi Hills of course divide their property equally to sons and daughters. The position of mother's brother in the house is very important and he is entrusted with the managerial duties. His consent is always taken in all the important socio-religious functions. The members trace their descent from an ancestress (*ka Jawbei tynrir*) and the descendants of one such ancestress are considered as members of one clan (*shi kur*). Exogamy is the normal rule and any breach in this regard is taken as most objectionable. Some of the clans are prohibited from intermarrying because they are supposed to have a common ancestor. The clans are sometimes socially graded and are entrusted with religions duties.

Belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is common but He is not usually involved. There are national as well as regional deities whose blessings are sought for in times of trouble. They are benevolent by nature and their help is obtained by suitable sacrifices. The Khasi also worship their ancestors. Food is offered to the manes and it is believed that those

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An Angami woman weaving a skirt. Naga Hills District, Assam.

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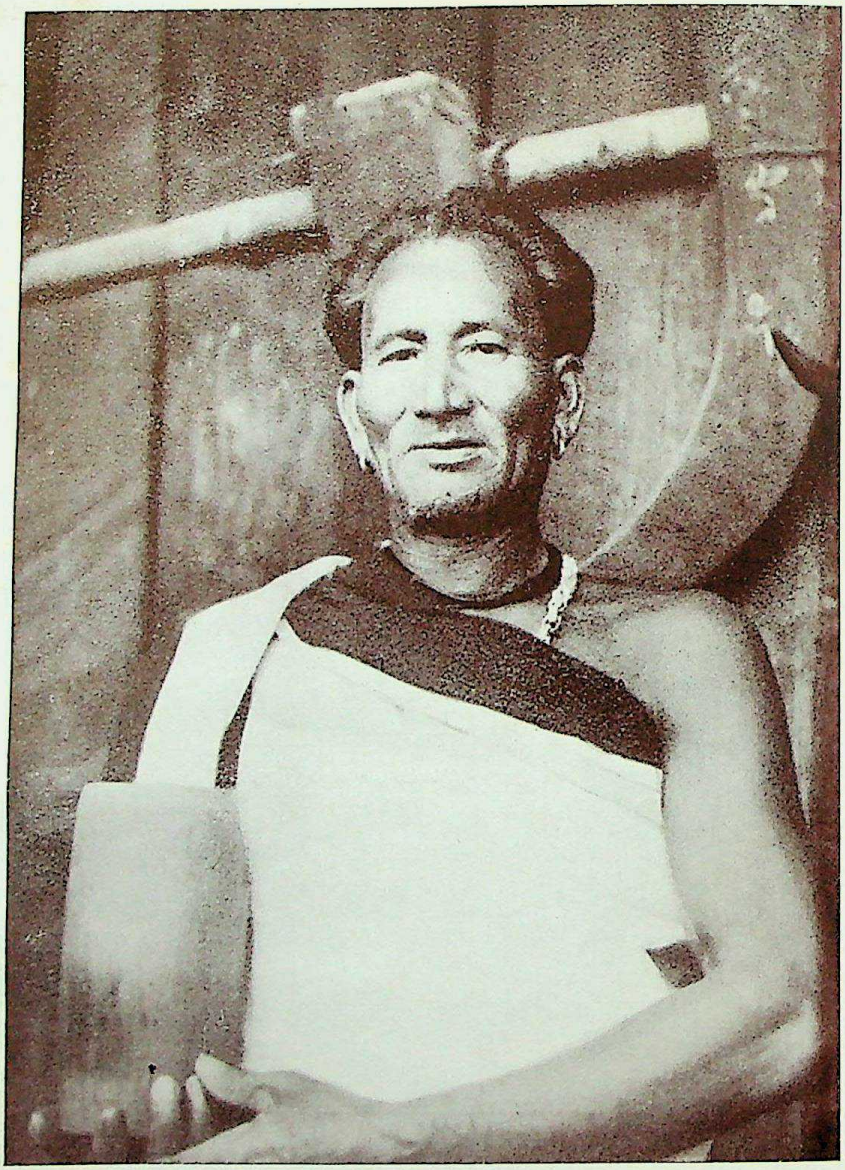

A village headman, Angami Naga.
Naga Hills District, Assam.

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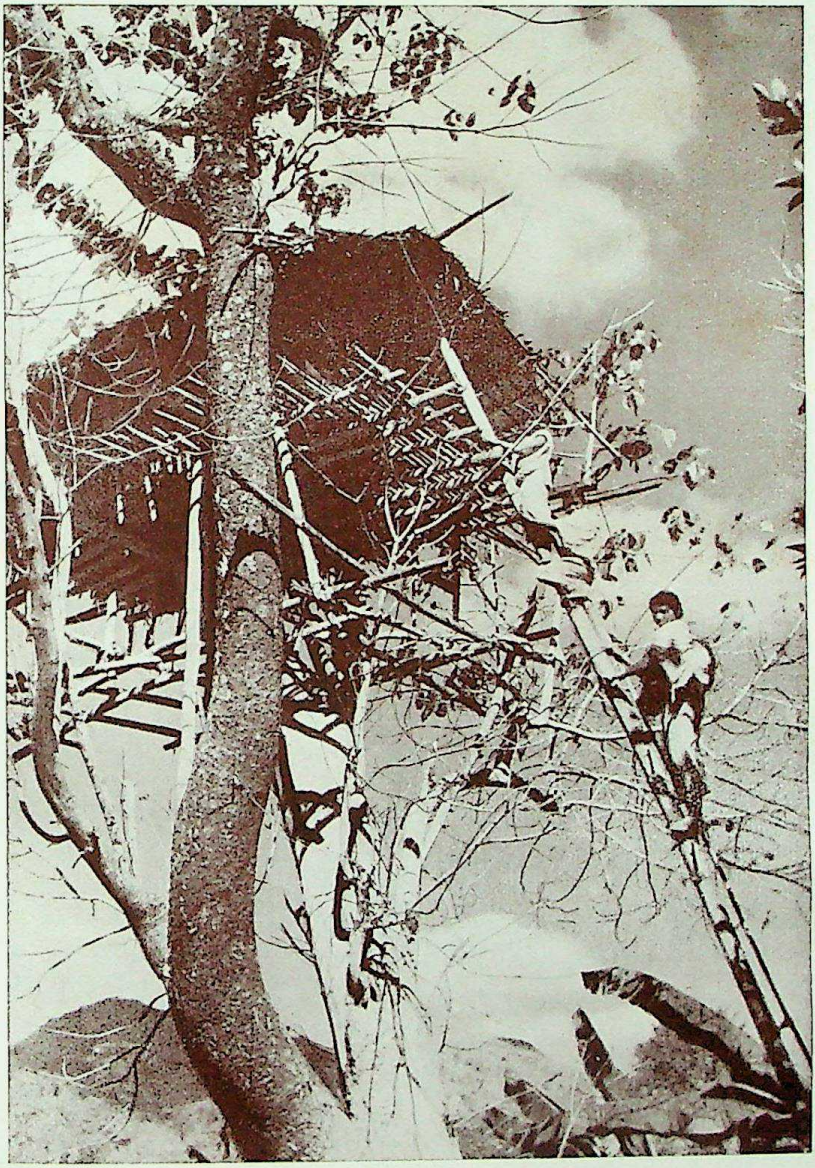

Tree hut of the Urali.
Kerala State (Travancore).

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An Urali with his pallet bow.
Madras State.

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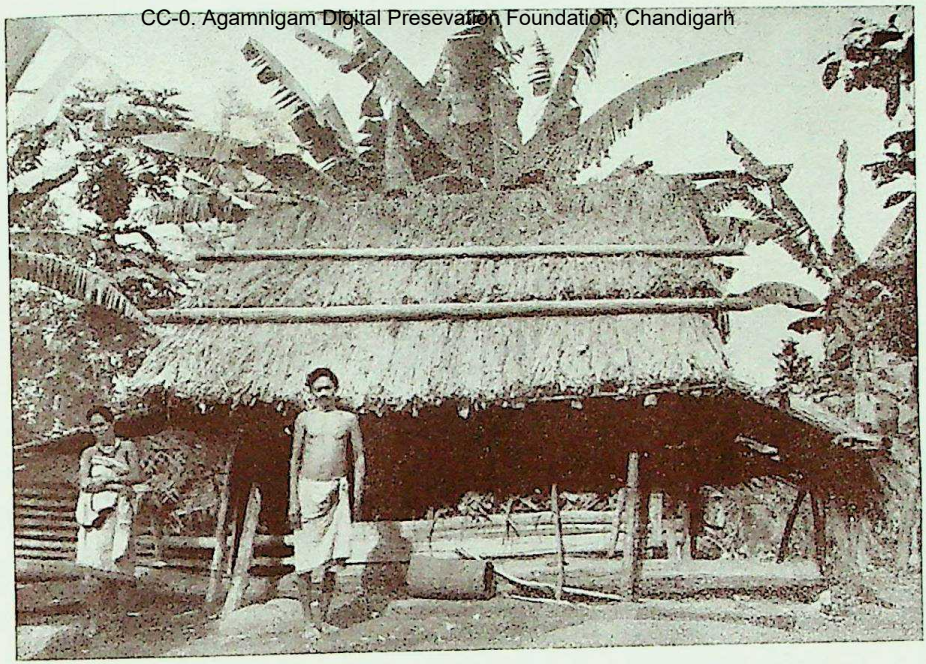
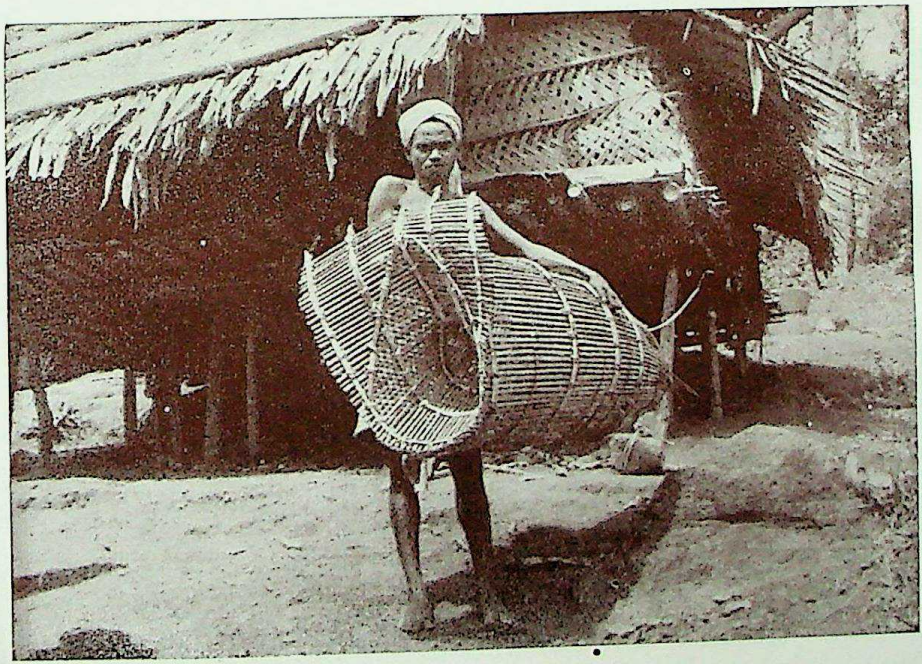


Dwelling hut of the Kanikkar. Kerala State (Travancore).



Kanikkar fish trap. Kerala State (Travancore).

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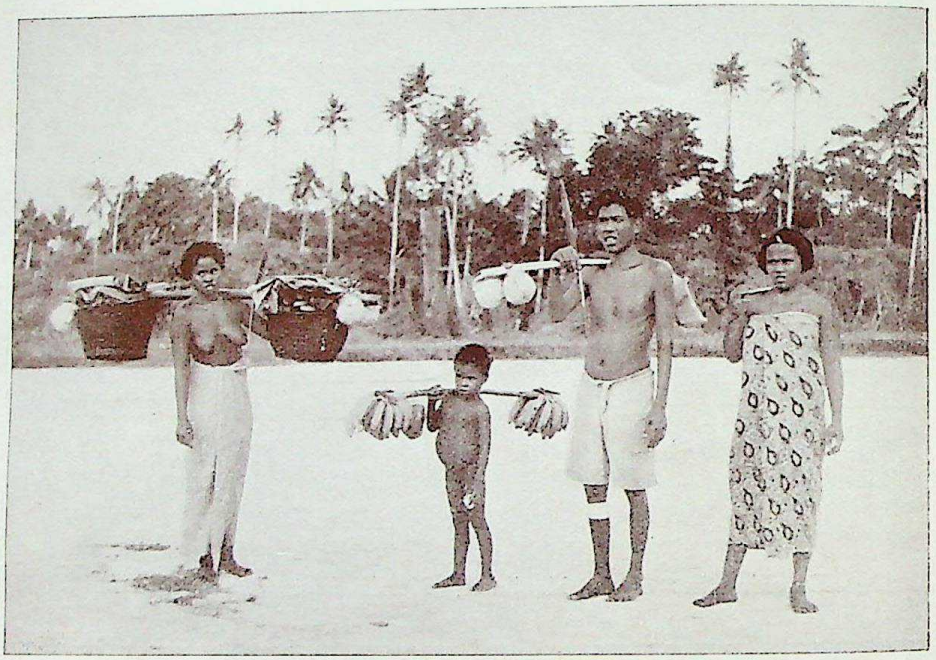

A Nicobarese family returning after collecting fruits.
Nicobar Islands.

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Khasi men in festive dress. United Khasi & Jaintia Hills District, Assam.

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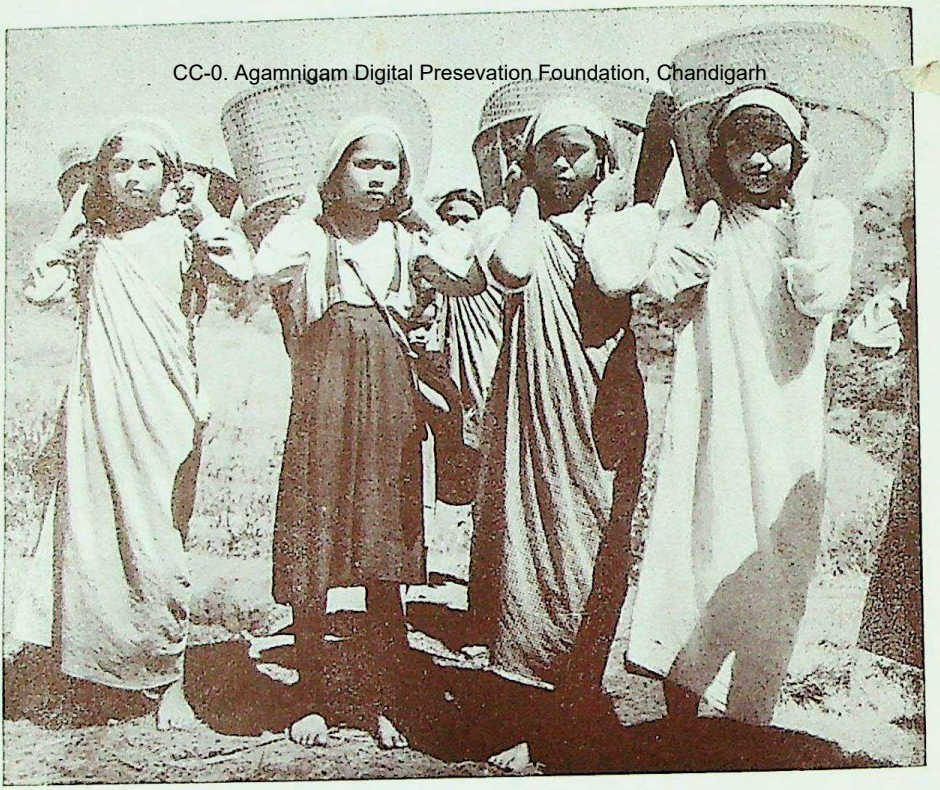
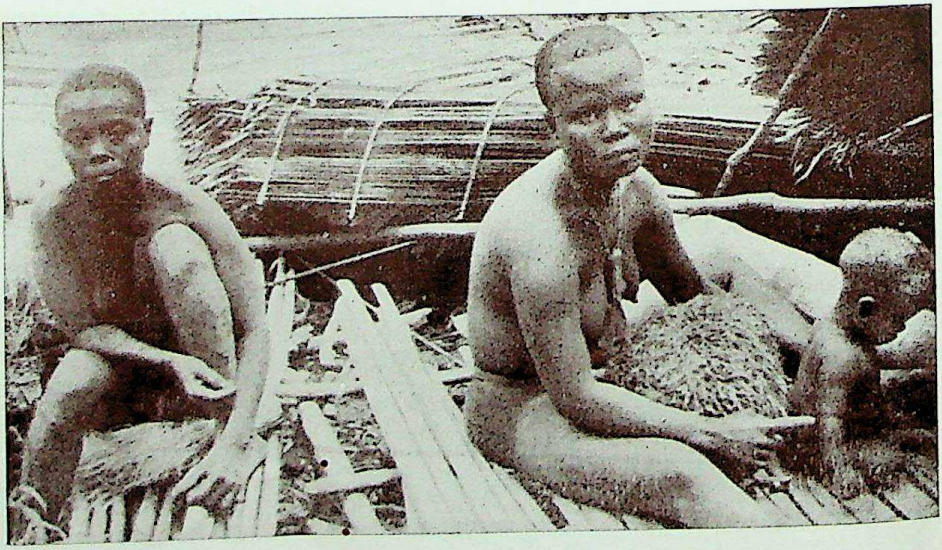


A group of Khasi girls on way to market. United Khasi & Jaintia Hills District, Assam.



Onge women and child. Little Andaman Island, Andaman Islands.

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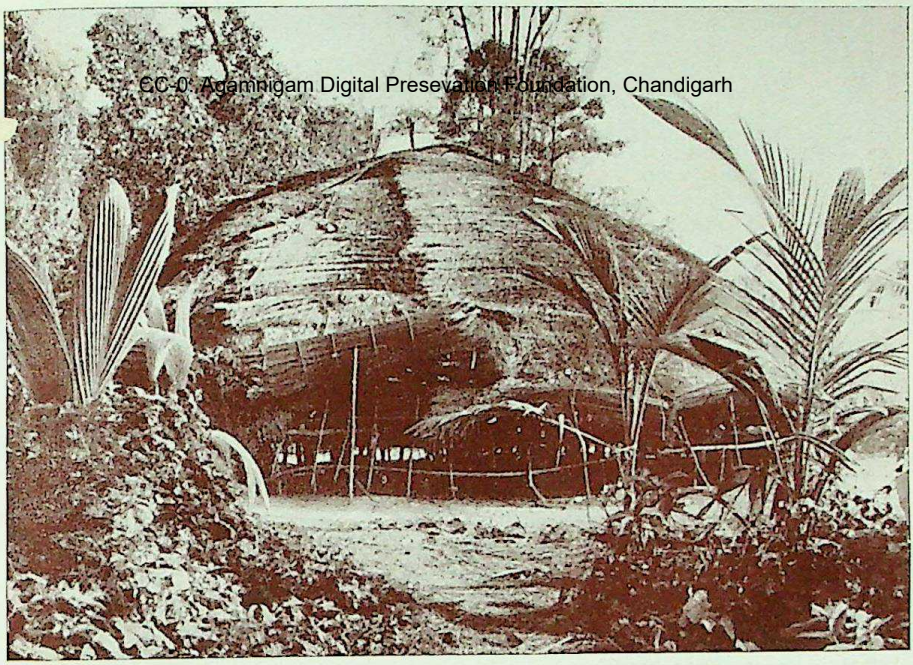
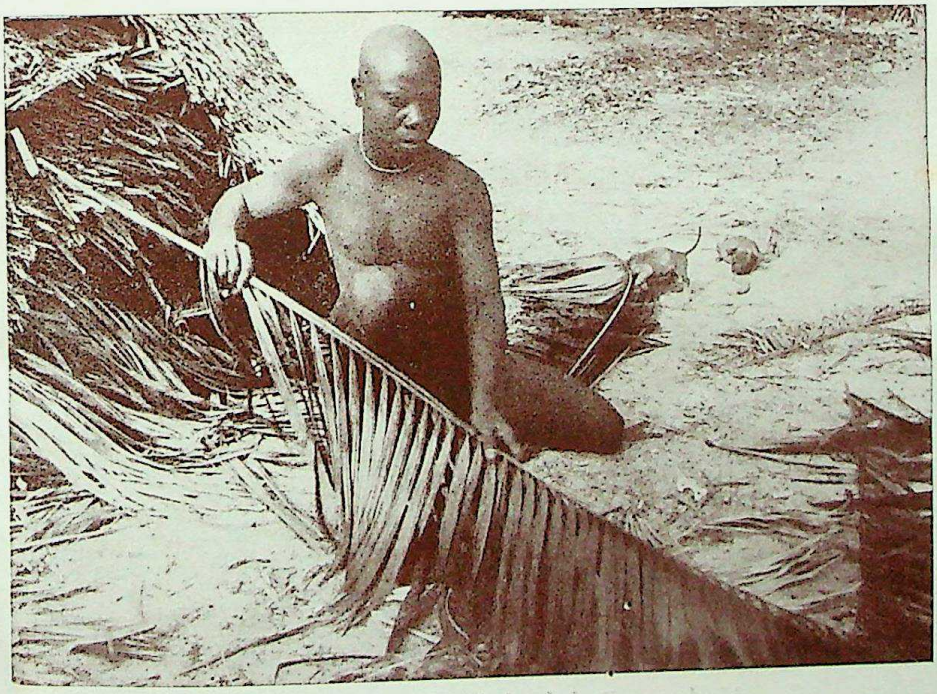


An Onge communal hut. Little Andaman Island, Andaman Islands.



An Onge preparing cane leaf for hut repairs. Little Andaman Island, Andaman Islands.

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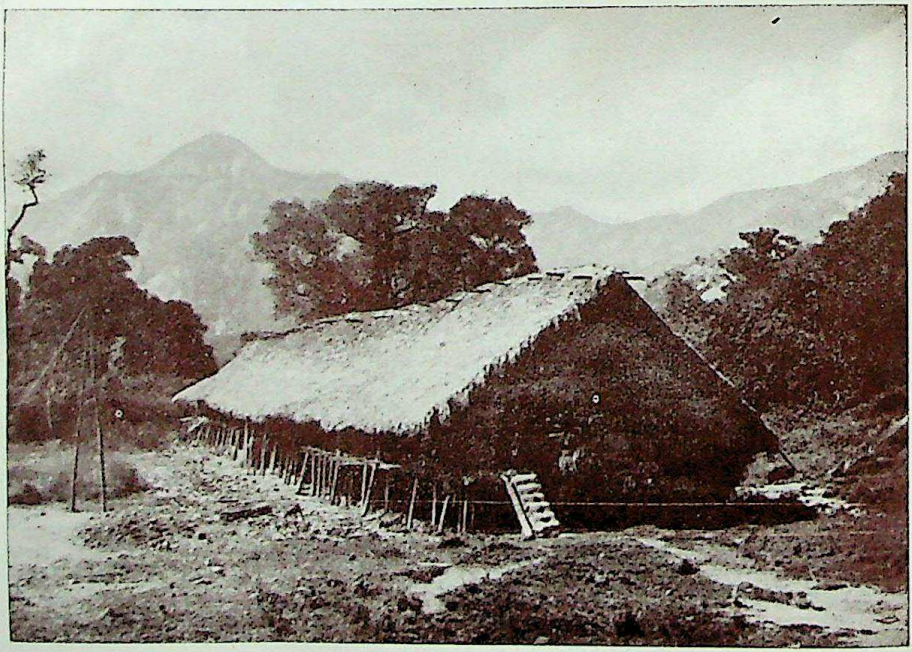
A design of clay-paint on Onge body. Little Andaman Island,
Andaman Islands.



Moshup — Bachelors' dormitory of the Adi.
Siang Frontier Division,
N.E.F.A.

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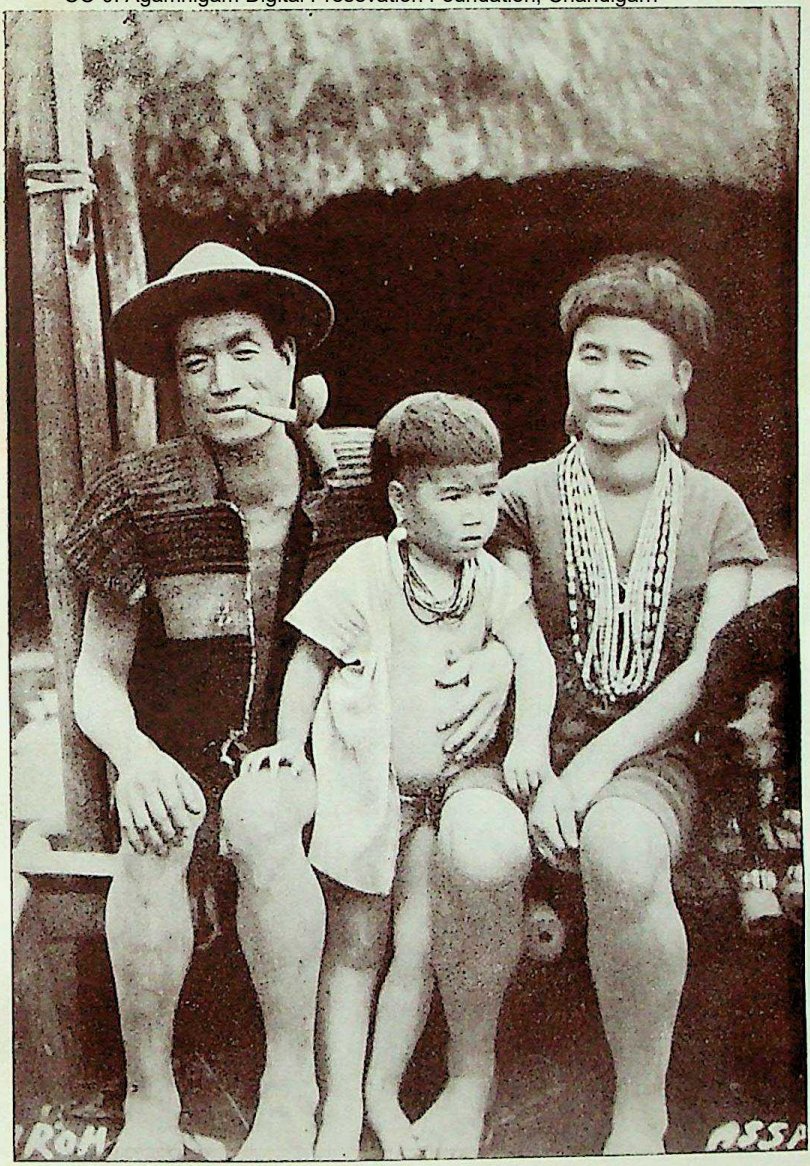

An Adi family. Siang Frontier Division, N.E.F.A.

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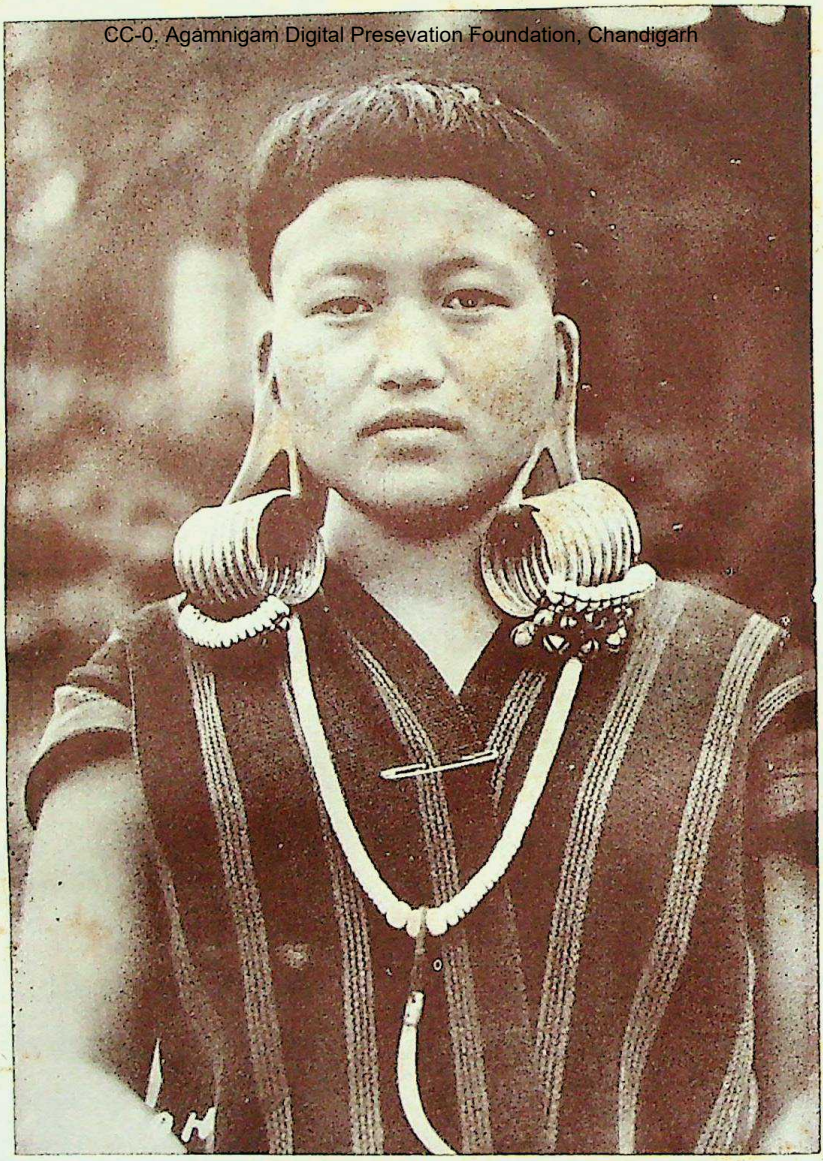

An Adi girl with heavy earrings. Siang Frontier Division, N.E.F.A.

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who neglect to do so will not be protected from numerous spirits of evil. These latter are considered to be the souls of persons whose funeral ceremonies were either not completed or who might have met with violent end. They hover everywhere and take up abode in the hills, streams and forests. Some of their miseries are avoided by due propitiation of the offended spirits. These are ascertained by process of divinition which is done by breaking of eggs and examining the entrails of cock. The village worship are entrusted to priest who has assistants (Sangot) to help him in such duties. Sometimes the Khasi approach the diviner (Chuwar) to know the cause of their illness.

The Khasi cremate their body after death, and the bones are placed in a temporary resting place called *Maw-wasa* which is stone cairn errect in a pyramidial structure of about 3′ to 4′ high. One of the first objects which strike the eye of a visitor in this district, is the large number of monoliths. They used to erect these long upright stones as memorial to dead when transferring the bones to their clan ossuries (Mawtylleng-tymo). Sometimes they used to commomerate an event by setting up a piece of stone. Now it is no longer practised and the bones of the dead are simply preserved in stone cairns.

The Siem is the head of a Khasi State. He exercises power over the villagers through his elected council, *Darbar*. The chief of some States are also called Lyngdoh and Sirdars, whose position is somewhat inferior to that of *Siem*. Maintenance of law and

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order is their main function. There are altogether twenty five Khasi States which have now merged into the State of Assam. They have now been provided with District Councils whose members are elected on adult franchise. The Constitution has vested to these bodies wide powers to enable them to frame their own future in accordance with their own tradition and culture.

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THE ONGE OF LITTLE ANDAMAN

The Onge, a very dark skinned, short statured tribe with short round head and infantile features and with hair of the head wholly of the 'pepper-corn' pattern grown in small tufts with vacant spaces between, are found living in Little Andaman. This island lies at about 60 miles south of Port Blair and is included in the long chain of 204 large and small islands known by the name of Andaman Islands, which starts at a distance of about 600 miles from the mouth of Hooghly river and continues to spread southwards till its southernmost point remains at a distance of three hundred and forty miles from the northern extremity of Sumatra. Little Andaman island covers an area of approximately 370 sq. miles. Its maximum length is 26½ miles while breadth from sea to sea is about 16 miles.

The Andaman islands have been peopled by the aborigines for a great many centuries. These aborigines are divided into several groups with differences of language and culture. Two main divisions have, however, been made which are called the Great Andaman group and the Little Andaman group. The Great Andaman group includes all the natives of the Great Andaman, except the Jarawa who live in the western parts of middle Andaman and South Andaman. The natives of the Great Andaman group, at present called the friendly Andamanese, though

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most numerous of all the Andamanese tribe about a hundred years ago, have been reduced to a mere strength of 23. The Little Andaman group includes all the inhabitants of Little Andaman—the Onge, those of the North Sentinel Island and the Jarawa. The North Sentinelese and the Jarawa are still hostile to all foreigners. The Andamanese belong to the Negrito race. Other human groups in Asia who also belong to the Negrito race and who are physically and culturally comparable to the Andamanese are the Semang of the Malaya Peninsula and the Aeta of the Phillippines.

No attempt was made to open up communication with the Andaman Islands until the end of the eighteenth century. Owing to the constant menace to shipping constituted by the islands and their aborigines the Govt. of India, in 1788, decided to start a settlement in the islands and Archibald Blair was commissioned to do the same. The settlement was founded at port Cornwallis, now Port Blair, by Blair in September 1789. The colony met with stiff resistance from the Andamanese. Still the settlement was a success. In 1792, however, the settlement was transferred to further north, now Port Cornwallis, a harbour which unfortunately proved to be very unhealthy, and in 1796 the settlement had to be closed. Again, after the mutiny of 1957, it was decided to open a penal settlement in Andaman islands and the old site was again selected and was named port Blair. The penal settlement was established in March 1858, and ever since the islands have been under the Indian

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administration. The Onge of Little Andaman, however, continued to remain hostile and the history of friendly relations of the Onge with outsiders is only 73 years old. It was only since March 1886 that due to constant efforts of M. V. Portman, the onge started behaving with outsiders in a friendly manner. They have, however, been more or less isolated in their habitat all these years and as such less open to harmful alien influences. The total strength of Onge population is not expected to be more than 200.

Within their habitat the Onge are seminomadic and, in the pursuit of food throughout the year, they have to be constantly on the move. On account of such compulsory movements the Onge have not developed any permanent type of habitations or 'villages'. Whether on the sea coast or in the deep interiors of the thick forest they have two types of shelters : one the permanent type of communal hut called *Bera* and the other the temporary type of shelter called *Korale*. A communal hut is the main dwelling place for the Onge where they stay for long periods during rainy season, and in which they preferably celebrate their main social events. They also bury the dead bodies inside the hut underneath the sleeping platforms. A communal hut is an up-side-down cup-shaped hemispherical structure the roof of which is covered with thick thatched eaves of cane leaves, which come down sloping towards the ground almost touching it. On one side of the sloping eave a low opening is provided for entrance. The eaves can be

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lifted up from anyside for more ventilation. Inside the hut wooden sleeping platforms are erected all round the central place with headside pointing to centre and legside to the circumference of the hut. The central place is left for the fire and dancing. Temporary shelter of *Korale* is put up in the open during the hot months. It usually is in a circular shape of sleeping platforms leaving enough of ground for fire and dancing, etc., in the centre.

The Onge, not knowing the art of agriculture, depend for their subsistence entirely on the natural product of the sea and the forest. From the sea they obtain dugong, turtle, an enormous variety of fish, crustaceas (crabs, crayfish and prawns) and molluscs. Fish and crabs are found in salt water creeks around the islands, while fresh water fish and prawns at times are available in plenty from the island channels. From the forest they obtain the flesh of the wild pig, wild honey, and a large number of vegetable foods, roots, tubers, fruits, and seeds.

Bow, arrow and spear are used by the Onge for hunting pigs. Dogs are set on to chase pigs for driving them to some blind crevices of the buttresses of the trees wherefrom they have no escape. The animals are then speared or shot by means of arrows.

For fishing, too, bow and arrow are used by men. Large fish is shot by means of an arrow. Women use small handnets made from twisted fibre to catch fish. Turtles and dugongs are harpooned from dug-out canoe. The prow and stern of the Onge canoe

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are carved out flat where one could stand with ease to aim and throw a harpoon.

Honey is collected in wooden buckets. Before climbing the tree, where there is a beehive, the man chews the leaves of a small plant called *Tonyage* into paste and rubs all over his body. The smell of this paste is supposed to ward off the bees. With another mouthful, the man climbs upto the hive and spits the paste all over to make the bees inactive with the result that the hive is dislodged from the tree easily. Honey is squeezed out by hand and stored in the bucket or glass bottles which are thrown on the shore by the sea waves. Some of the bottles of honey are bartered out these days in exchange of some tobacco leaf from visitors. Waz collected from the hive is used for seasoning fibre cords, fishing nets and wooden utensils.

Roots, tubers, jackfruits and fish are cooked by the Onge by keeping the articles directly to fire. Thicker types of tubers, pig and turtle flesh are also cooked by boiling in water. Tin or aluminium containers are received from outside visitors. Another important method of cooking is like bake-cum-steaming. Logs of wood are put on fire and reduced to burning coals over which coral stones are spread to become sufficiently hot. Large leaves of certain plants are then hurriedly spread to cover the hot corals and then large pieces of pig or turtle flesh or jackfruits are strewn over the leaves. Another covering of green leaves is given on the spread meat or jeckfruit and then the whole fire and flesh, etc., are covered

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with loose earth or sand thoroughly so that no steam may escape. It takes about 4 to 5 hours within which with the heat of stones and the steam from green leaves, etc., the food becomes thoroughly cooked. Surplus meat is kept on high wooden platform type of stands away from the reach of dogs with burning fire below. Such meat, however, does not last for more than three or four days after which, if still left over, it is discarded. Art of storing food by means of smoking, etc., is not known to Onge. The only article of food stored is jackfruit seeds which are kept tied up in a net inside water on the bank of some stream and taken out during rainy season when there is no other substantial vegetable food available.

Strips of bark are worn by men to cover their genitals. Women have a tassal prepared from thin strips made from young unopened cane leaves hung up in the front tied to the girdle which is also prepared from bark fibre. There is nothing else to speak regarding the dress of the Onge. At the present time the Onge get some pieces of cloth from Port Blair or from visitors. These are worn by men round the loins. Women, however, use cloth only as an ornamentation to their head. Other articles of personal ornaments are strips of bark and cords made of fibres. Straps of palm leaves are also used by women on ceremonial occasions. Necklaces made of dentalium shells are worn by women. These days small trinkets like finger rings and bangles or some cheap necklaces are received from visitors, and are worn by women. Thin strips of dendrobium

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skin are used in decorating the articles of use like the bucket, or bow and arrows, as also the girdles which are worn.

The Onge, like other Andamanese tribes, have no method of their own of making fire. At the present moment they obtain matches from Port Blair or from visitors. Fires are kept alive in the settlements and during group movements pieces of specially selected rotten wood with smouldering fire are carried in hand.

The Onge appear to have forgotten the art of pottery for a long time. No earthen utensils are seen in the island. Buckets of wood made from the trunk of a soft wooded tree are hollowed out with chisel type of twisted adze piece tied to a stick. Outside of bucket is charred with fire while inside is painted with beeswax. Water vessels are made from giant bamboo pieces that are found on the shore drifted by the sea. Large dried pieces of barks from trees serve as tray or dish for holding of food. A nanlilus shell forms a drinking vessel. These days some aluminium vessels like sauce pans, mugs, etc., are received from Port Blair and visitors, and are in use.

There are two varieties of baskets made in Little Andaman. One, the smaller type called *Toleoaga*, is made with more care and finer workmanship, and the other, the bigger variety called *Tole-Laya* is made with less care and for more temporary use. Both are with rounded bottoms and are made of cane.

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Canoes are in regular use with the Onge for travel as well as for harpooning turtles and dugongs. The Little Andaman canoe is a small dug out with one outrigger and is propelled with paddle or with pole. The Onge have been undertaking even long sea voyage to Port Blair from Little Andaman on their canoes.

The Onge shave their heads with flake of glass which is obtained from the sea bourne glass bottles thrown on the shore. The operation of shaving is mainly done by women. Men and women alike get the entire head shaved. Men and women paint their bodies with thin whitish clay and red ochre mixed with pig fat. White clay, the Onge believe, saves their skin from insect bite while red paint serves medicinal purpose if some individual is having fever. In times of mourning, however, red ochre paint is a taboo.

The Onge are a small population of roughly 200 individuals moving about from settlement to settlement in bands of 5 to 15 families. There appear to be three broad divisions into which all the Onge families could be divided. One group is of those families which belong to the settlements of the north-east coast of the island. They are known by the name of *Giremeka-Gobenle.* The second group consists of the Onge belonging to the interior huts. They are called *Engakwale.* The third group is of the people belonging to the huts of south and west coasts of the island, the name of the group being *Gireraragobeule.* Of these the first two groups have

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greater accord among them, while the third group is not as intimate with either.

An Onge family unit consists of husband, wife and their children. Average size of an Onge family is 3. 06. There are reasons to believe that the Onge population has been dwindling for some time. Number of women is smaller, while many of them are old widows. In the Onge social organisation, however, a family which is constituted by a permanent union between one man and one woman is of great importance. This union is sexual as well as economic whereby a man acquires sole right to sexual union with his wife while the provision of food and preparation of it for each other becomes obligatory for both members of such a union. The regulation of marriage is on the basis of certain relationships which appear to be well defined. Taboos of certain relationships are practised faithfully. Children are borught up by parents but there also appear to be good provisions of relationships of children through adoption with most of the members of the local group. Friendly relationships between the groups called *Giremeka-Gobenle* and *Engakwale* have led to intermarriages between members of both groups, as well as change of permanent residence by some members of one group with the other. Such relationships have, however, been not so frequent with the people of south-west coast.

There does not appear to be any organised form of Government in the island, but affairs of the local

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groups appear to be regulated by the senior members of the community. The hunting ground belongs to the whole group while trees of jackfruit and the beehives may be marked by the individuals as their own. Hunted animals, or collected roots, are individual belongings but they are to be shared with those who have none for the time being. The return of such distribution is customarily obligatory. A request even from the member of a different group, however, is seldom refused. Temporary guests even from the not very friendly group will receive all hospitality. Things are exchanged through barter. The only division of labour appears to be between the two sexes. Though every individual appears to possess the skill to fashion his own implements, etc., yet there are a few particularly skilled men who make canoes or prepare fibre ropes.

Recreational activities comprise mainly of singing and dancing which the Onge do very frequently. There are songs for almost every occasion or activity. Men are often seen, during leisure, sporting with bow-and-arrow-game shooting some sort of target. Young children keep bow and arrows and enact make believe hunting or harpooning expeditions, while little girls are found practising some sorts of dancing steps.

Not much information is available yet regarding religious ideas or superstitious beliefs of the Onge. They, however, do appear to believe in the existence of evil spirits which bring calamities to their island or families. Dead individuals are supposed to turn

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into spirits and revisit the island. The dead are buried inside the communal hut below the sleeping platforms. After the lapse of suitable period of time the mendible of the deceased is taken out and worn by the widow or the nearest kin of the widow preferably brother for some days.

The Onge at the present are not entirely isolated. Govt. officials have been visiting the island for some years, while the Onge on their own have been visiting Port Blair. This has given them the opportunity of contacts with outsiders. They have, thus of late, been having growing consciousness of alien objects and ways. There is no interpreter of their speech yet but a couple of Onge men have picked up a few Hindi expressions. The speech of the Onge belongs to the Andamanese group of speeches which appear to have no affinity with any of the language family groups of the Indian Subcontinent.

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THE CHENCHU [1]

The Chenchu, a semi-nomadic tribe of Hyderabad, inhabit the hilly Amrabad plateau in Mahbubnagar district. A few scattered Chenchu are also found in the district of Nalgonda. They are also met within the Madras Presidency.

The Chenchu in the past were nomads and even at present, in spite of some settled villages, their nomadic habit has not been completely exterminated. The villages of Sarlapally, Railet and Pulajelma are inhabited permanently. In the South-Western portion of the plateau the Chenchu are migratory. In this area they have well-built houses located near good water supply and collection of edible plants. In certain seasons they leave these permanent houses and live in temporary shelters erected in the jungle. During the rainy reason and cold weather they live in the settlement and at the advent of the hot season in March, the flowering time of the *mohua* trees (Bassia latifolia), they migrate in pursue of the *mohua* flowers.

The Chenchu come under the Australoid group. In Mahbubnagar district they number 3,280 and 9,003 in Madras Presidency according to 1941 Census. Their stature is medium, complexion dark brown, head long with prominent eye-brows and

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1 An extract from Furer-Haimendorf, Christopher von—The Aboriginal Tribes of Hyderabad, Vol. 1, The Chendhus.

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broad nose with a depressed root. Their hair varies from wavy to curly but never frizzly.

Their personal cleanliness depends on the supply of water. Where water is plentiful, the Chenchu bathe and wash themselves clean, otherwise he is careless. The hair receives proper attention ; it is washed at least once a month, a little ghee is applied to make it smooth and it is combed with wooden combs. Most men grow their hair long and tie it into a knot on the side, top or back of the head. The women part their hair in the centre and twist it into a knot on the nape of the neck.

The dress of the Chenchu in the ancient past consists of jungle leaves, but now-a-days cloth is purchased from the bazar or from wandering traders. A man wears a waist string made of twisted fibre and a cloth, 5"-6" wide, is passed between his thighs, and the ends thereof are held to the waist string. On cold days a cloth is used to cover the body. Some men also use a cloth turban. The women wear a sari and a choli or blouse.

In the past, ornaments were made from jungle products. The women dried various seeds and strung them into necklaces by fibres of creepers. The men adorned their necks with peacock feathers. Wristlets and armlets were made of flexible fibre. Today these products are rare. Beads, lead and white metal ornaments are now in vogue, and are purchased from traders. The women wear bangles and ear-rings made of metal. The children use a few strings of beads round their necks. The ornament

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for the men is meagre and consists only of ear-rings.

The material culture of the Chenchu is simple. The digging stick is the most important tool and it is indispensable. It is used for digging the edible roots and tubers. The hunting equipment is the bow and arrow and sometimes guns purchased from the plains. The axe is always carried by a Chenchu when he leaves the village. It is used for chopping wood and clearing jungle growth. A straight bladed knife serves for cutting bamboo. The axe and the knife are foreign goods. The domestic utensils consist of wooden laddles, wooden mallets for grinding chillies and flat wooden plates for serving food. Salt is stored in gourds, and bamboo vessels function as measures of his forest products. Basketry is an important craft, and it finds a market among the plains people. Round shallow baskets are used for drying fruits. *Mohua* flowers are stored in straight circular baskets. The baskets for collecting honey are made of thin textures.

The toilettee articles are wooden combs and flat tapering pieces of wood for killing lice. The varieties of musical instruments are flute, drum and the pan-pipe. The pan-pipe is an elaborate one, made of river reeds and a small gourd.

The dwellings are permanent or temporary shelters. The Chenchu house is circular in ground plan with a solid wattle wall and a conical thatched roof with one door. On the day of construction friends and near relatives of the man give a helping hand.

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The temporary shelters are low grass huts without wattle wall. Shelters may also be constructed of leafy branches which when green render moderate protection against sun and rain.

The tribal economy depends mainly on hunting and food gathering. A limited number cultivate Indian corn or maize, millets and chillies, but the produce is negligible. They collect various roots and tubers in the jungle taking with them their digging sticks and collecting baskets. The fruits consumed are varieties of berries, mango, ficus and tamarind. Herbs add to the collection of food. The *mohua* flowers are largely collected which is an important article of diet and liquor is also made from them by the process of distillation. There is no division of labour in the food gathering products but the collection of honey is the monopoly of the men. The men exhibit much skill in the collection of honey. The beehives are usually on the face of cliffs and two or three men go together at the time of bringing honey. Long ropes are used to scale the cliff-face to reach the honey-combs. The combs are carved off with an iron knife or a flat wooden baton. Another interesting way of collecting honey from inaccessible combs is by shooting arrows with strings attached to them. The arrows are thrust into the comb and the honey flows down the string which is collected in a basket.

Birds and small games like hare, squirrel and monkey are shot with bow and arrow; while sambhur, deer, panther and tiger are shot by muzzle-

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loaders. Sometimes to kill squirrel and birds stones are pelted at them. The hunted flesh in the Chenchu diet is procured from bear, hare, squirrel, wild cat, jungle fowl and small birds, while ants are taken as delicacy. The hunting devices such as traps and snares are not used.

Fishing is done where opportunity is present. If within the village boundary there is no river or tank the people never go fishing. Where it is possible, fishing in shallow pools is done by poisoning the water with pounded bark of Mundulea Suberesa. The stuperfied fish are caught by the hand. The rod and line are of recent introduction.

The domestic animals are the cow, buffalo, and goat. Milk products are made and only flesh of goat is consumed. Poultry games are rare though chicken and eggs are eaten. The dog is seen in every village and acts as a village guard.

The processs of cultivation is simple. Small plots of land are chosen and clods of soil are turned by wooden stakes. Holes are made at intervals by the digging stick and into each hole a few seeds are dropped and covered with earth.

Trade is carried out in the bazar or from wandering traders. The Chenchu purchases clothes, household goods, axe-heads and iron point of a digging stick. He bartars baskets for millets. His income as a labourer is very meagre. Only those who are near the cart tracks are recruited in the Forest Department for clearing forest roads, the daily wage being only three-quarter seers of millet.

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The social structure is made up of the simple family, the local group and the village community. A family consists of husband, wife and their unmarrid children. The village community composes of the individuals who have common ownership of a tract of land adhering to the permanent settlement. The local group designates the families inhabiting a settlement at any particular time.

Marriage is usually by mutual choice. Cross-cousin marriage is also in vogue. There is also marriage by negotiation. On selecting a mate the boy informs his parents to seek the bride. The parents of the boy meet those of the girl and get the consent. If they agree the date of marriage is fixed. The bridegroom's people have to purchase a sari and a choli for the bride. On the wedding day the bridegroom, relatives, friends and the headman proceed to the bride's house. They carry with them presents of rice, *mohua* flower and bottles of liquor. The bride's family welcome them and exchange greetings. The bridegroom hands over the sari and choli to the bride's mother. The bride is dressed in the new clothes and the headmen of the contracting parties formalize the marriage. The couple are asked 'whether they are willing to become husband and wife' and this completes the marriage followed by feasting, drinking and dancing till late at night. The next morning the bridegroom's party accompanied by the bride returns to his parents' roof till a new house is constructed whence they move into it.

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Recreation among the little boys is playing with bows and arrows. The girls do not have toys but play with chips of wood for dolls. Young men entertain themselves with music. Dancing is a social event. They dance at marriages and at the mohua flower harvest.

The rights of inheritence are communal and individual. The village community is in joint possession of an individual tract of land and so no individual proprietorship in land is recognised. Fruits are also communally owned. Individual property such as axe, knife, digging stick and minor articles are shared among the sons according to their needs. The ornaments of a woman acquired from her parents go to her daughters failing which they pass into the hands of the sons. Cattle and house are owned by the sons.

A Chenchu violating the law is expiated by giving a feast to the responsible men of the community. The Peddamanchi acts as a headman of the village community. The council of elder and the Peddamanchi settle disputes. The Council also attends to cases of adultery and quarrels. The guilty person has to treat the council with liquor.

The Chenchu imparts his knowledge on curing diseases and illness known to him. Herbs are used in the treatment of stomach pain. Headache is cured by burning the forehead with a heated creeper. Only when his understanding fails he attributes illness to be caused by malevolent spirit, which is found out by divination. On the patient's

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recovery offering is done to that particular spirit. The dead are buried and recently burning has also been introduced. Burial takes place within a short interval after death. In a permanent village the dead is buried in the burial ground. In a temporary shelter he is buried in a suitable place but never brought back to his home. The dead is buried in his own clothes, his head is oriented to the Southwest, face towards the east and feet in the north-east. The grave is covered with earth and stones are piled on it. Food is offered to the grave for the next three days.

The Chenchu is engulfed in the belief of various spirits and deities. Garelamaisama is the most influencing deity. She brings luck in the chase and also in finding edible fruits. Before going for a hunt prayers are invoked for success. If favoured the hunter gives a little offering on the spot. The first fruits of the mango, tamarind and several other fruits are offered to her. The deity influences the blossom of the mohua flowers and she is invoked for the fall of the flowers. The first mohua liquor distilled in the year is offered. In the collection of honey she is not forgotten with a little piece of the honey comb.

Bhagavantaru is also another benevolent deity. He gives protection in the jungle and the Chenchu who is constantly with nature never forgets his blessings. Potasama is the presiding deity of small-pox.

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KANIKKAR

The Kanikkar live in the Reserved Forest of South Travancore. They numbered 7,527 in the Census of 1941. Ethnically they belong to Proto-Australoid group. At present, they speak a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam.

The Kanikkar are found in large number in Chembikunnu Settlement at Kallar ; Naranelli at Palode and Cherukara and Villimala at Kulathupuzha. Elsewhere the number of the families varies between five and twelve. The Kanikkar live upon shifting cultivation but at some places, namely, Palode, Madathura and Kulathupuzha, plough cultivation was adopted long ago. They also collected various wild roots and tubers on which they depend for a part of the year for sustenance.

They are surrounded by people speaking either Tamil or Malayalam. Nowhere have they succeeded in escaping from the influence of the latter. But the Kanikkar of Palode, Madathura and Kulathupuzha have changed more than the rest.

The Kanikkar are at present matrilineal only in descent. They have a wealth of traditions and beliefs but their material culture is very poor.

The characteristic feature of the social organization of the Kanikkar is the division of the tribe into two exogamous groups, each of which consists of a

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number of clans called *illangal* (plural of clan—*illom*).

The members of each clan consider themselves as well as other members of all other clans of the same group as *annanthambimar* (brothers). As marriage is forbidden among them they take mates from one of the clans of the corresponding exogamous group, the members of which are *machambimar* (marriageable mates) to the former. Similarly, the members of former exogamous group *machambimar* enter into marriage with them.

On the demise of any member of one exogamous group all other members of all the clans forming the same exogamous group observe mourning (*pulai*). For three or seven days and during this period the *machambimar* also observe mourning for three days and supply them with the necessaries of daily life. On the third day (or seventh day) of the death, the *annanthambimar* and *machambimar* assemble in the house of the deceased, where for the removal of the pollution, juice obtained from the kernel of cocoanut and the leaves of *karunthotli* plant, is sprinkled on the heads of all the persons by two men of opposite exogamous division and betals are offered for chewing.

The headman of a village is called *muttukani*. Formerly he was succeeded by his next younger brother and when the last surviving brother died, the eldest of the sisters' sons used to succeed. But now even a son succeeds. Similarly ancestral property used to be inherited by sister's children exclusively

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and the acquired property of the family was divided equally amongst one's own children and sister's children. But now the sister's children do not have any claim. The Kanikkar follow *Makkathayam* system instead of *Marumakathayam*.

Kinship system is classificatory in nature. They apply the term *appan* (father) to father's brother and mother's sister's husband and a separate term (*ammachun*) to mother's brother and father's sister's husband.

The terms *Kattiavan* and *Kattiaval* for husband and wife carry distinct social functions. The word *Kattu* means to tie. It is common among the Kanikkar and probably among some higher castes of South India that the bridegroom ties the *tali* (marriage badge) round the neck of the bride at the time of marriage and so the husband is referred as *Kattiavan*. The Kanikkar of Palode do not have *tali*-tying custom. Hence, the terms *Kattiavan* and *Kattiaval* are missing in their terms of kinship.

Of the women belonging to the opposite division of a man, brother's widow, mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, and wife's sister are the real mates and it is the duty of a man to marry one of them. But in recent years the practice of cross-cousin marriage is gradually breaking down.

The father is the head of the family with full authority over unmarried children and has the full control over the family property. In a family the husband and wife work together to clear jungles, sow

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seeds and enjoy the product. When children grow up they take part in economic activities. Even after their marriage, when sons live separately, they help the father in securing food. Outside the family, the mother's elder brother *(karanavan)* plays not an insignificant part. No marriage can even be settled if the *karanavan* dissents.

Residence is patrilocal. A man must live with his parents for sixteen years for the completion of domestic training. Generally a man lives with his parents till his marriage or at least till the birth of a child. During this period, he claims land, reclaims it and starts cultivation. While harvesting is nearing, he erects a hut by himself and lives there with his wife.

The most important custom among them is the avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law. The mother-in-law can take the name of the son-in-law, but the latter cannot do so. Neither of them can touch one another.

The smallest socio-economic unit of each exogamous division is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and the unmarried children. In the family,unmarried persons are segregated. The parents sleep in one comparment of the hut with children below ten years of age. Unmarried daughters on their puberty may also sleep with sons below ten years in a separate compartment (*chaipu*) erected for the purpose near the main hut. Unmarried sons between ten to twenty used to sleep formerly in a separate building (*patapura*) near the headman's hut.

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Children are brought up with love and affection and they are cared for irrespective of sex. Their notion is that the children born out of love deserve affection as they are always desired—'If a serpent is born, it is to be loved'. But they are not beyond reproach.

Besides agriculture, the Kanikkar also gather various kinds of food from the forests. Different kinds of wild roots, *chanam*, *neduvan*, *nooran*, *cherukizhangu*, *karala* and *parand* save their life for certain period of the year. Different kinds of fruits trees like the jack (*chaka)*, cocoanut *(thanga)*, mango *(manga)*, cashew not *(parangiandi)* and guava *(paraka)* are cultivated. Wild animals like rats *(eli)*, squirrels *(malayannan)*, monkeys *(Kurangu)*, wild boars (*panni)* and jungle fowls *(kattukoshi)* are also hunted for food.

Wild roots which are not the primary source of food for the Kanikkar, are taken by majority of the families for two to three months in a year and by some throughout the year. But before the adoption of tapioca cultivation, the Kanikkar supported themselves entirely with what was available in their habitat.

Death is called *chavu* and the dead are also known as *chavu* or *chavanmar*. The Kanikkar believe death to be the consequence of old age and natural decay. In the case of those who meet with premature death, they attribute it to the influence of malignant spirits.

Persons of both sexes dying above the age of twentyfive are cremated, the rest being buried. Those who die of epidemics like cholera and small-pox and women dying in child-birth are also buried. *Sasta*,

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who is popularly known as *Ayyan* or *Ayyappan* is the principal deity of their worship. They have a number of minor deities and Supernatural Beings whom they worship during their religious and magical rites.

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URALI

The Urali are a very short statured people with long head, medium long face and medium nose. They numbered 230 (129 males and 101 females) and 916 (454 males and 462 females) respectively in the Census of 1921 and 1931. They are found scattered in Thodupuzha Range (Vellur and Arakulam), Kumili Range (*Aiyappnacoil*), Game Range (Vanchivayal) and Neriamangalm Range (Mullaringed) in the Kottayam and Moovattupuzha divisions of North Travancore.

In the past they migrated from one settlement to another. They had practically much less contact with the people of the low country and no contact with the tribes like Mala Arayans, Mannans and Paliyans inhabitating the same regions. They used to live in tree house (*erumadam*) in most of the places. A few earthen pots for cooking and iron implements and mats form their chief household equipments. They depend for most of the year on wild roots, though hill-paddy is raised by shifting cultivation and tapioca forms a part of their subsistence. They never serve as labourers in the tea gardens owned by Europeans. All efforts to persuade them to do so, have so far failed. Their keen sense of superiority to Mannans and Paliyans and their extreme puritanism based on primitive magic prevent interdinning with men of other faiths and their deep-

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rooted apprehension of maltreatment of their women-folk in the tea gardens force them to face the rigours of the hills rather than go in for new and easy but uncertain ventures.

There is close co-operation between the different clans-men (*kuttakkars*) of the Urali tribe. They extend material aid to one another when it is needed, while all clansmen go into mourning if one of them dies. They reckon descent through the mother. The biological family (*kuttumbam*) consisting of parents and unmarried children forms the chief socio-economic unit. The older system of clan (*kuttom*) organization has survived, but it has been subjected to severe change. Marriage among the Urali is based on an exchange in which a woman, preferably a sister, either own or tribal, is exchanged for a wife. This exchange is not only customary but obligatory. Kinship, which is based on the classificatory system of relationship, is regulated by marriage and determines their social behaviour. This together with their ardent belief in magic builds up the fabric of their cultural life. They apply the term *appan* to father, his brothers and mother's sister's husband and so on.

The only potential mates of a man were, in the past, the female cross-cousins who are exclusively called *murrapennu*. When such mates are not available, classificatory cross-cousins are preferred. They cannot be thought of in any other relation and it is why they are distinguished from the father's brother's children and mother's sister's children.

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The Urali being matrilineal in descent, like many other South Indian tribes, the mother's elder brother who is popularly known as *karanavan*, was the supreme head. As the master in the house of his sister, he was also the custodian of his sister's children. Although, the frequency of cross-cousin marriage has fallen at the present, owing to the change in the *Marumakkathayam* system of inheritance and partially owing to the exchange system, the *karanavan*' s power and prestige have been considerably undermined—he is still responsible for securing a wife for his sister's son. Marriage is a simple ceremony among the Urali. It comprises of a feast of rice gruel (*kanji*) to the relatives of the spouses. No bride price is given to the bride's parents and it is not even incumbent on the part of the bridegroom to present a cloth and a nominal gift of few annas to the bride's mother.

Polygyny is practised. The maximum number of wives a man has is three and those who have many sisters to exchange, have taken to polygyny.

But if the Urali community had adhered to the strict principle of exchange and no girl was given in marriage either by way of charity or loan, a large number of adults had to remain unmarried and the society had to face crisis. A strong tendency among the unmarried is developing to break this social injustice and disability and marry a woman belonging to other tribes. In the family today the father is the head and is responsible for feeding the children and bringing them up. The family property acquired by the father is inherited by his sons, who on the

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other hand look after the parents in their old age. The father's authority in the family is unchallanged and none in the family can do anything without the knowledge of the father. Even when the sons get separated after marriage, they must not do anything without the full consent of the father.

The Urali forming a cultural pocket marooned in the hills and deep forests have by reason of their habitat retained largely the belief in spirits. Spirits are benevolent as well as malevolent. To the Urali, the sun is the creator and the lord who rises in the east every morning. He is the source of crops and it is he who can give plenty. *Sastha* is invoked on every occasion of religious import. Even in the purely magical rites, such as the curing of diseases an invocatory prayer is offered to *Sastha.*

Kalan is the god of death. He is considered to be the leader of all hostile spirits.

The Urali belived that disease causing spirits exist from the beginning of them, i.e., they were created along with mankind. They are immortal and are not subject to affliction of any kind.

They bury the dead and place all the articles used and desired by their dead relatives in their graves.

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